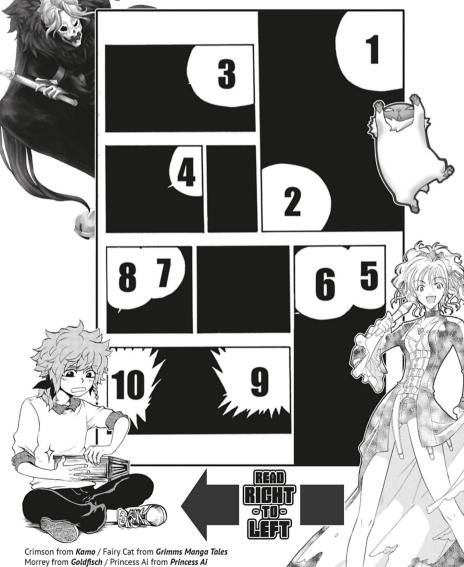


# STOP

THIS IS THE BACK OF THE BOOK!

How do you read manga-style? It's simple! Let's practice -- just start in the top right panel and follow the numbers below!



# **DRAMACON**Svetlana Chmakova



### **COMEDY**



When amateur writer Christie settles in the artist alley of her first-ever anime convention, she sees it as an opportunity to promote the manga she started with her artist boyfriend. But when she unexpectedly falls for a mysterious cosplayer, things become complicated. Web-comic vet Svetlana Chmakova gives us a funny, romantic, behind-the-scenes look at an anime convention where sometimes even two is a crowd!



### COMEDY

"When die-hard vampire enthusiast Arika comes across a mysterious young man named Divo, it seems she struck the jackpot and found a drop-dead gorgeous vampire of her own! Unfortunately, she quickly finds out the disappointing truth: Divo is all beauty, no brains, and no vampire instincts whatsoever.

This laugh-out-loud supernatural love comedy features a vampire in beta and the vampire fangirl determined to make him worth her time!"



# ALICE IN KYOTO FOREST, VOLUME 1 Mai Mochizuki & Haruki Niwa

lice in

### **FANTASY**



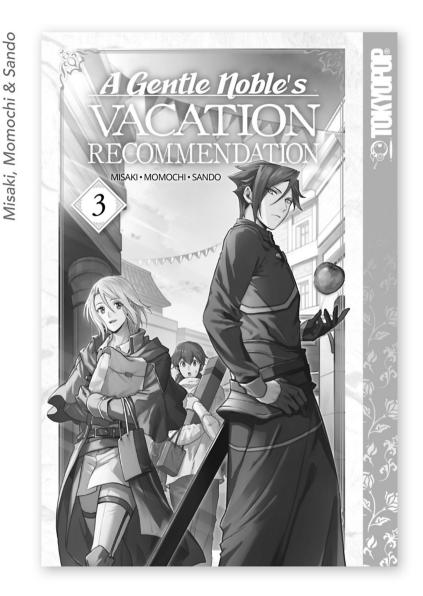
Alice has lived with her aunt for most of her childhood, but her uncle clearly doesn't want her around. At fifteen years old, Alice decides to return home to Kyoto and train as a maiko, an apprentice with the hopes of eventually becoming a full-fledged geisha. But when she arrives back to the city where she was born, she finds that Kyoto has changed quite a bit in the years since she left it. Almost as if it's a completely different world...



### **FANTASY**

The kingdom of Nohmur has been a peaceful land for humans since the exorcist Eron Shirano repelled the demons and sealed the way to the underworld of Ruhmon. Generations later, sisters Lys and Rin are the heirs of the illustrious Shirano family, the most powerful exorcist clan charged with watching over the barrier and maintaining balance between the two worlds with the aid of Hikaten, the Sword of a Hundred Souls. Until one day, for unknown reasons, demons begin slipping through once more...





### **ISEKAI**



Lizel and Gil resume their journey, having promised Judge's grandfather to protect Judge along the way. But danger soon catches up to them when a strange group of bandits called the Forky Gang attacks in the middle of the night! It quickly becomes clear that someone is targeting Lizel... but who could it be, and for what reason?

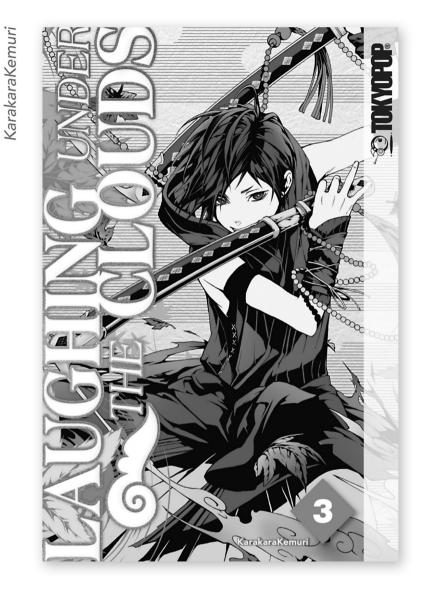


### DRAMA

Takara Takarada is an undiscovered genius actor who fully embodies every character he plays — but this genius can only be brought forth by his best friend and fellow actor, Yuuji Kamojima, who cares for Takara even as he envies him for his innate talent. How long will he be content to stay in his best friend's shadow?



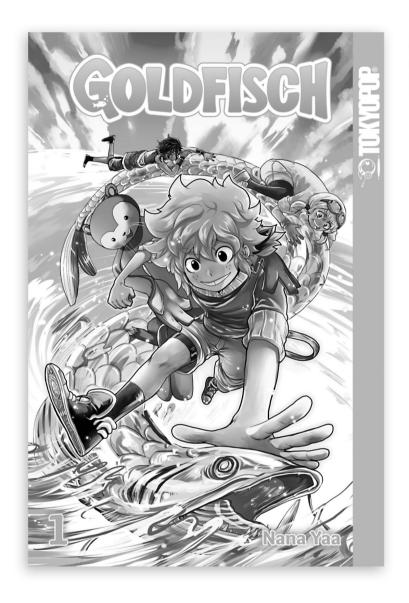
# LAUGHING UNDER THE CLOUDS, VOLUME 3



### **FANTASY**



In the early Meiji era, against civil unrest and the end of the samurai way of life, Japan's crime rate skyrocketed. As prisons overflow, the government has no choice but to build a new, inescapable prison. This prison is Gokumonjo, located in the center of Lake Biwa, which means it relies on the three sons of the Kumo family to transport criminals to it. But is Gokumonjo truly just a prison for petty criminals...?

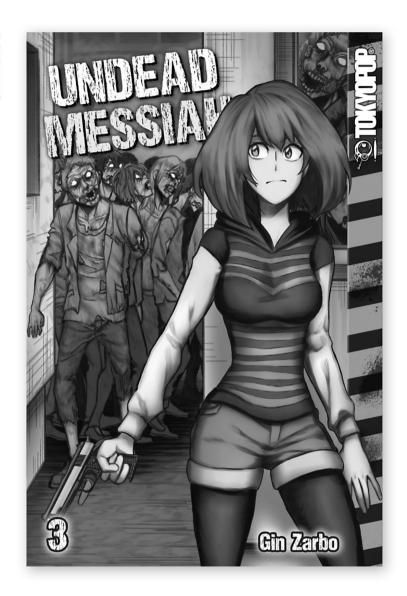


### **ADVENTURE**

Say hello to Morrey Gibbs! A fisher-boy in a flooded world overrun with dangerous mutated animals known as "anomals," he's got his own problems to worry about. Namely, how everything he touches turns to gold! Sure it sounds great, but gold underpants aren't exactly stylish — or comfortable! Together with his otter buddy and new inventor friend Shelly, Morrey's on a quest to rid himself of his blessing-turned-curse and undo the tragedy it caused. That is of course, if they can dodge the treasure-hungry bounty hunters...



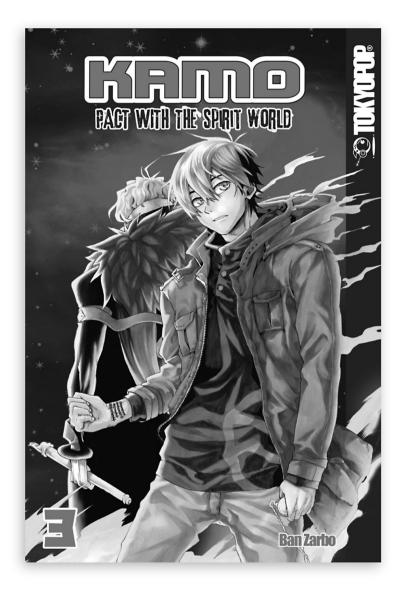
# UNDEAD MESSIAH, VOLUME 3



### **ACTION**



Tim is your ordinary, average, zombie-obsessed teen, and knows exactly what he'd do in the event of a mass awakening of living corpses. Unfortunately for him, he gets to test those plans for real. When an outbreak of living corpses takes over his town, Tim finds himself unwittingly in the middle of a vast undead conspiracy. Ritch, the internet's socalled "savior," has taken him captive and is experimenting on him. As his body reacts to the virus and reveals zombie-like symptoms, Tim must uncover Ritch's true intentions and the undead's origins, revealing them to the world... before it's too late.



### **FANTASY**

Kamo has kept death at his doorstep for years. Now, just before his last breath, he receives a visit from a powerful being named Crimson. Crimson offers him a chance at a new and healthy heart in exchange for his help in capturing twelve spirits. However, Kamo will find out a pact with a spirit is not without its price...











- ① THE JIEGU WAS
  A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT
  FROM THE WESTERN
  REGIONS THAT WAS
  INTROPUCED TO CHINA
  PURING THE NORTHERN AND
  SOUTHERN DYNASTIES. IT
  BECAME POPULAR DURING
  EMPEROR XUANZONG'S RULE
  IN THE TANG DYNASTY.
- ② AS EMPEROR XUANZONG HAP A GOOD SENSE OF RHYTHM, HE WAS A MASTER OF THE JIEGU, GIVING RISE TO THE LEGEND THAT HE MADE FLOWERS BLOOM WITH THE JIEGU.



(3) "THE RECORDS OF JIEGU" STATE THAT WHEN IT WAS SPRING AND THE FLOWERS IN THE COURTYARD WERE ABOUT TO BLOSSOM, EMPEROR XUANZONG COMPOSED THE SONG "GORGEOUS SPRING" WHILE DRUMMING. AFTER HE FINISHED DRUMMING, HE NOTICED THAT ALL THE FLOWERS HAD BLOSSOMED. EMPEROR XUANZONG THEN LAUGHED AND SAID, "SHOULDN'T I BE CALLED THE LORD OF HEAVEN AFTER SUCH A FEAT?"



- ① TONGGUAN WAS ONE OF THE CHOKE POINTS ON THE ROUTE TO THE WESTERN REGIONS. IT WAS INITIALLY BUILT ON A MOUNTAIN PASS TO IMPEDE INVASIONS FROM THE WESTERN REGIONS.
- @ THE QINLING MOUNTAINS LIE TO THE SOUTH OF TONGGUAN, AND THE YELLOW RIVER LIES TO ITS NORTH. THE ROUTE IS DIFFICULT, MAKING IT EASY TO DEFEND AND HARD TO ATTACK. IT WAS CALLED "THE STRONGEST PASS".



3. AS THE "EASTERN GATE" OF CENTRAL CHINA, IN ANCIENT TIMES, TONGGUAN WOULD HAVE BEEN CHANG'AN'S LAST L'INE OF PEFENSE AGAINST ATTACKS ADVANCING FROM LUOYANG. CHANG'AN WOULD BE IN GREAT PERIL IF TONGGUAN FELL.

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# DIEXIE BELT

- 1) DIEXIE BELTS WERE A TYPE OF ANCIENT BELT. SIMILAR IN APPEARANCE TO MODERN BELTS, THEY WERE OFTEN USED IN THE SUI AND TANG DYNASTIES.
- 2 ON A DIEXIE BELT WERE DANGLING STRAPS. THINGS LIKE WEAPONS AND DECORATIVE ITEMS COULD BE HUNG FROM THESE STRAPS, MAKING









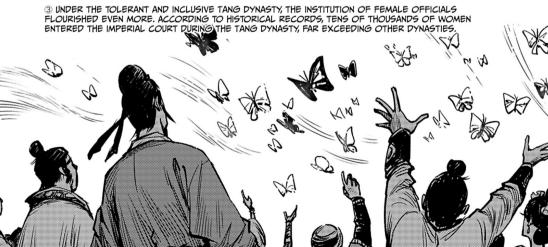


- ① FEMALE OFFICIALS WERE FIRST RECORDED IN "RITES OF ZHOU". HERE, THIS TERM REFERRED TO HIGH-RANKING COURT LADIES WHO MANAGED THE EMPEROR'S HAREM.
- ② THE MOST FAMOUS FEMALE OFFICIAL WAS SHANGGUAN WAN'ER OF WU ZETIAN'S RULE. SHE MANAGED BOTH GOVERNMENT A FFAIRS AND THE IMPERIAL HAREM FOR MANY YEARS. SHE WAS KNOWN AS "THE FEMALE PRIME MINISTER".















- ① THE ANXI ARMY BELONGED TO THE ANXI PROTECTORATE. BOTH GAO XIANZHI AND FENG CHANGQING WERE COMMANDERS OF THE ANXI ARMY.
- ② THE ANXI ARMY POSSESSED FORMIDABLE MILITARY STRENGTH AND WERE SKILLED AT WINNING BATTLES DESPITE FEWER NUMBERS. FOR A TIME, THEY WERE UNDEFEATED IN THE WESTERN REGIONS, AND WERE CONSIDERED THE MOST LOYAL GUARDS AND TOUGHEST DEFENDERS OF THE NORTHWEST.
- (3) THE BRAVERY, FEARLESSNESS, AND LOYALTY DISPLAYED BY LI E EPITOMIZES THE SPIRIT OF THE ANXI ARMY. THE GROUND BENEATH CHINA'S FEET ONCE BELONGED TO THE HOMELAND THEY SOUGHT TO DEFEND.





- ① THE IMAGE OF THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS ON THE FLAG SYMBOLIZED THE LIGHT OF HEAVEN OVER THE WORLD.
- ② THE FLAG OF THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS WAS THE MOST DISTINGUISHED SYMBOL IN ANCIENT TIMES, SURPASSING EVEN THE DRAGON FLAG. IT WAS OFTEN USED TO SIGNAL THE EMPEROR'S ARRIVAL.
- ③ JIMING CARRIED THE FLAG OF THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS, AND STOOD FIRM AGAINST THE MENACING REBEL TROOPS BY HIMSELF. FROM JUST ONE GESTURE, THE YOUTH'S FEARLESSNESS AND HUNGER FOR JUSTICE WAS MADE APPARENT.



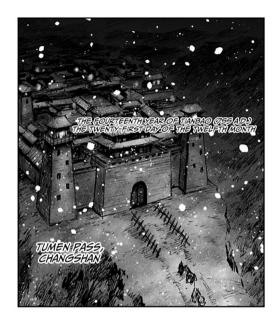


- ① THERE ARE FOUR STANDARD FORMS OF SABERS IN THE TANG DYNASTY: THE YIDAO, THE HENGDAO, THE ZHANGDAO, AND THE MODAO.
- ② THE SABER THAT LI E USES IN HIS ASSASSINATIONS IS A HENGDAO. THIS WAS A WEAPON CARRIED BY REGULAR SOLDIERS IN THE TANG DYNASTY. THE BLADE IS LONG AND STRAIGHT, WITHOUT ANY CURVATURE, AND THE EDGE IS SHARP, GIVING IT AN AUSTERE APPEARANCE.



UNDER THE MOONLIGHT, LI E NIMBLY LEAPS THROUGH THE AIR, THE SOUND OF THE WIND ENVELOPING HIS HENGDAO. HE AIMS AT THE ENEMY'S GENERAL AND PLUNGES IT DEEP INTO HIS CHEST. A FLAWLESS EXECUTION FITTING THE IMAGE OF AN ASSASSIN.

# TUMEN PASS, HEBEI PROVINCE



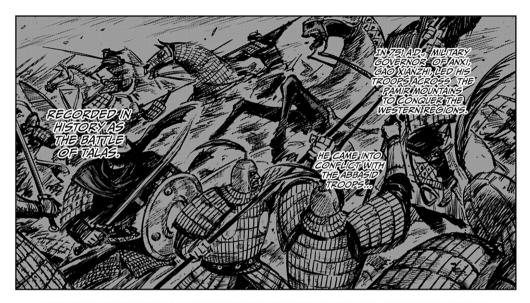
② HAN XIN LED HIS TROOPS AGAINST THE ZHAO, RESULTING IN A FACE-OFF AT TUMEN PASS. DESPITE THE GREAT DIFFERENCE IN MILITARY STRENGTH, HAN XIN STATIONED HIS TROOPS AGAINST THE RIVER, LEAVING THE HAN TROOPS WITHOUT THE OPTION OF RETREAT AND FORCING THEM TO FIGHT FOR THEIR LIVES. HOWEVER, HAN XIN CHANGED THE ZHAO FLAG AT THE ZHAO CAMP TO A HAN FLAG. THE ZHAO ARMY MISTAKENLY THOUGHT THAT THEIR CAMP HAD BEEN ATTACKED, FLEW INTO A PANIC, AND RETREATED IN DEFEAT.

① THE CHINESE SAYING "TO BATTLE WITH ONE'S BACK TO THE WATER" (TO PUT ONE'S OWN TROOPS WHERE THEY CANNOT RETREAT) COMES FROM A QIN-HAN DYNASTY BATTLE AT TUMEN PASS.





# BATTLE OF TALAS



 $\mathbin{\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}}$  The battle of talas was a military encounter between the anxi army of the tang dynasty and arab coalition forces at talas.





@ IN THIS STORY, AFTER THEIR DEFEAT, LI E VOLUNTEERED TO STAY BEHIND AND GUARD THE REAR WITH OTHER BRAVE SURVIVORS. THEY FOUGHT ALONE TILL THE VERY END — A TESTAMENT TO THE COURAGE OF THE ANXI SOLDIERS.



- 1) "YELUOHE" MEANS "WARRIOR" IN OLD TURKIC.
- ② IN NAME, YELUOHE IS COMPOSED OF AN LUSHAN'S EIGHT THOUSAND SWORN SONS. HOWEVER, THE YELUOHE IS ACTUALLY AN LUSHAN'S PERSONAL ARMY.
- ③ AMONG THE YELUOHE WERE MANY HU PEOPLE OF THE WESTERN REGIONS, MOST OF WHOM WERE ZOROASTRIANS. THEY SAW AN LUSHAN AS A GOD OF LIGHT.











### DID YOU KNOW? THE TERM "GOLDEN TURTLE SON-IN-LAW" (MEANING A WEALTHY SON-IN-LAW) ORIGINATED FROM THE "GOLDEN TURTLES"!

① THE GOLDEN TURTLE TOKEN WAS ORIGINALLY CALLED THE FISH BROCADE, WHICH WAS A TOKEN, FOR OFFICIALS TO VERIFY THEIR IDENTITY WHEN ENTERING AND LEAVING THE PALACE DURING THE TANGED DYNASTY.

2 DURING WU ZETIAN'S RULE, THE FISH BROCADE WAS CHANGED TO A TURTLE, AND AFTER ZHONGZONG RECLAIMED THE THRONE, IT WAS CHANGED BACK TO A FISH BROCADE.





- ③ THE TANG DYNASTY HAD A STRICT SYSTEM GOVERNING THE ATTIRE OF OFFICIALS IN DIFFERENT RANKS AND THE TOKENS THEY WERE ALLOCATED. ONLY OFFICIALS RANKING THIRD AND ABOVE COULD CARRY THE GOLDEN FISH BROCADE.
- 4 IN "ASSASSIN'S CREED DYNASTY", THE GOLDEN TURTLES REFERS TO A MYSTERIOUS ORGANIZATION IN THE IMPERIAL COURT.



## NURSERY RHYMES PREDICTING THE FUTURE





### SPARROW LULLABY

THE SPARROWS FLY, INTO THE SKY, AND IN THE SKY, GIRLS LAY WHITE FELT TO DRY, AND ON THE FELT, GOLD PILES HIGH!

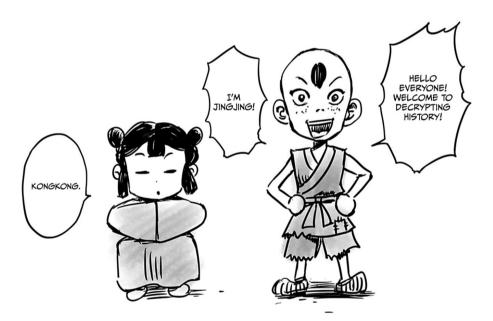
THE "SPARROW LULLABY" HAD ALREADY SPREAD AMONG THE POPULACE BEFORE AN LUSHAN REBELLED.

- ① "THE SPARROWS FLY, INTO THE SKY" ALLUDES TO AN LUSHAN SPARKING THE REBELLION AND CROWNING HIMSELF EMPEROR, AS THE NAME OF THE COUNTRY WAS "YAN" (SPARROW).
- ② THE LINE "AND IN THE SKY, GIRLS LAY WHITE FELT TO DRY" REFERS TO GIRLS OF ALL FAMILIES IN THE COUNTRY WHEN AN LUSHAN ENTERED LUCYANG. THIS IS REPRESENTED BY THE CHARACTER & (GIRL), UNDER THE UPPER RADICAL FROM \$\( \text{FRMILY} \) WHICH TOGETHER FORMS & (AN).
- ③ THE TERM USED FOR "GOLD PILES HIGH", 千金, LITERALLY MEANS "A THOUSAND GOLD PIECES". THERE ARE A THOUSAND PIECES IN A SINGLE STRING OF COINS. MAYBE HISTORY WAS GIVING HIM AN INADVERTENT WARNING!



## KONGKONG AND JINGJING'S

## DECRYPTING HISTORY



DURING A COUNTRY'S TIME OF CRISIS, THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD BE STRATEGIZING TO PROTECT THE EMPIRE AND QUELL THE REBELLION. YET, YANG GUOZHONG IS ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT PRESERVING HIS POSITION AND PLAYING POLITICAL GAMES. IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE.

WITH THAT IN MIND, DOES YANG GUOZHONG PROVOKING AN LUSHAN TO SPARK A REBELLION INDICATE THAT THIS DISASTER STEMS FROM A POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN THE GOLDEN TURTLES THEMSELVES?

HOW MANY HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS IN THE IMPERIAL COURT ARE PART OF THE GOLDEN TURTLES?

I NEED TO CONDUCT FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS TO CONFIRM MY CONJECTURES.

SOME SAY THAT YOU ARE AVOIDING THE MELEE IN THE SOUTH AND REMAIN IN XUNYANG. OTHERS SAY THAT YOU ARE IN JINLING. HOWEVER, THE WORLD IS IN CHAOS NOW AND ROADS ARE BLOCKED. NOBODY IN CHANG'AN CAN SAY FOR CERTAIN WHERE YOU ARE.

HENCE, I STILL DO NOT KNOW WHERE TO SEND THIS LETTER AND WILL KEEP IT SAFE ON MY PERSON FOR NOW.

PLEASE TAKE CARE.

- CHAO HENG (ABE NO NAKAMARO)



ACCORDING TO MY INVESTIGATIONS, BEFORE HE DIED, ZHANG YIZHI SECRETLY PRODUCED AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD WITH A MAID TO CARRY ON HIS BLOODLINE.

THE NAME OF HIS ILLEGITIMATE CHILD IS YANG GUOZHONG.

HENCE, MY GUESS IS THAT YANG GUOZHONG IS A PRESENT MEMBER OF THE GOLDEN TURTLES AND A KEY FIGURE OF THE BROTHERHOOD. A FEW YEARS AGO, HE EVEN VINDICATED HIS BIRTH FATHER, ZHANG YIZHI. THIS SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT PROOF OF HIS INVOLVEMENT.

PERHAPS AN LUSHAN, WHO WIELDS MILITARY STRENGTH, IS ALSO PART OF THE GOLDEN TURTLES.

I RECALL THAT WHEN THE IMPERIAL COURT WAS INFORMED OF AN LUSHAN'S REBELLION, YANG GUOZHONG WAS QUITE COMPLACENT, AS IF HE HAD EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL. HOW LAUGHABLE! NOW, THE EMPEROR IS NO LONGER ABLE TO SUPPRESS HIS RAGE. HE HAD ALREADY ISSUED AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE HIMSELF WOULD TAKE TO BATTLE, AND HIS SON WOULD PRESIDE AS REGENT. IN LIGHT OF THIS, YANG GUOZHONG STARTED TO GROW UNEASY.

ALLOWING THE EMPEROR'S SON TO ACT AS REGENT IN UNUSUAL TIMES IMPLIES THAT A GREAT DEAL OF THE COURT'S POWER WILL SHIFT INTO HIS HANDS, AND THAT THE TIME OF SUCCESSION GROWS NEAR. AS YOU KNOW, YANG GUOZHONG HAS CONSTANTLY SOUGHT TO SUPPRESS THE CROWN PRINCE TO PRESERVE HIS OWN POSITION AND POWER. IF THE CROWN PRINCE BEGINS TO POSSESS REAL POWER, THE FIRST ACCOUNT HE WILL SETTLE IS THE ONE HE HAS WITH YANG GUOZHONG.

A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE IN THE PALACE TOLD ME THAT YANG GUOZHONG AND LADY GUOGUO HAVE PERSUADED YANG GUIFEI TO GROVEL AND PLEAD WITH HIS MAJESTY.

"IF YOUR MAJESTY TAKES TO BATTLE, I WILL KILL MYSELF."

ONLY UNDER YANG GUIFEI'S DESPERATE PLEAS DID THE EMPEROR FINALLY RESCIND HIS ORDER.



FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, AS DYNASTIES ROSE AND FELL IN CHINA, THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SECRET SOCIETY IN CONTROL OF THE CORE POWERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. AT TIMES, THEY WOULD HELP A SUITABLE CANDIDATE OF THEIR CHOICE TO ASCEND THE THRONE. AT OTHERS, ONE OF THEIR OWN MEMBERS WOULD SEIZE CONTROL OF THE STATE AND BECOME EMPEROR.

AS YOU KNOW, IN THE TANG'S SYSTEM OF IMPERIAL RANKS, OFFICIALS OF THE FIFTH RANK AND ABOVE WOULD BE GRANTED THE FISH TOKEN IN THE SHAPE OF A CARP AS PROOF OF THEIR STATUS. IN THE TIME OF HER RULE OVER SIXTY YEARS AGO, WU ZETIAN BELIEVED THAT HER SURAME, WU, WAS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURES "XUAN WU" — SIGNIFYING THE TURTLE AND THE SNAKE. HENCE, SHE CHANGED THE FISH TOKENS TO TURTLE TOKENS AND USED THESE TURTLE TOKENS TO SIGNIFY THE RANKS OF OFFICIALS. WITHIN THE NINE RANKS OF OFFICIALS, THOSE OF THE THIRD RANK AND ABOVE WERE GIVEN GOLDEN TURTLES; THOSE OF THE FIFTH RANK AND ABOVE WERE GIVEN SILVER TURTLES; THOSE OF THE SIXTH RANK AND BELOW WERE GIVEN NONE. WU ZETIAN BECAME EMPRESS AND PROMOTED HER OWN RELATIVES TO POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE, CONSOLIDATING HER POWER.

AFTER THAT, A SECRET SOCIETY WAS FORMED. IN THE IMPERIAL COURT, THEY COMMANDED IMPORTANT POSITIONS AND MILITARY POWER. BEHIND THE SCENES, THEY CONTROLLED THE FATE OF THE WORLD. THESE POWERFUL, IMPORTANT MINISTERS WERE THE GOLDEN TURTLES.

BACK THEN, ONE OF THE CORE MEMBERS OF THE GOLDEN TURTLES WAS EMPRESS WU'S FAVORITE — A MALE LOVER KNOWN AS ZHANG YIZHI. IN THE SHENLONG REVOLUTION FIFTY YEARS AGO, EMPRESS WU YIELDED THE THRONE. ZHANG YIZHI AND THE GOLDEN TURTLES WERE ALSO QUASHED, AND THE TANG WAS FINALLY RESTORED. THE IMPERIAL COURT CHANGED THE TURTLE TOKENS BACK TO FISH TOKENS, HOWEVER, A FEW REMNANTS OF THE POWERFUL SECRETLY KEPT THEIR TURTLES AND PASSED THEM ON AS TOKENS TO IDENTIFY EACH OTHER AS MEMBERS OF THE SECRET SOCIETY. THESE PEOPLE CONTINUE TO EXERT THEIR INFLUENCE OVER THE IMPERIAL COURT. MEMBERSHIP IN THE GOLDEN TURTLES IS NO LONGER RESTRICTED TO OFFICIALS OF THE THIRD RANK AND ABOVE. AS LONG AS THE BROTHERHOOD ACKNOWLEDGES AN INDIVIDUAL, THEY ARE ALLOWED TO CARRY THE GOLDEN TURTLE IN SECRET.



WHILE MY SHIP MET WITH AN ACCIDENT AT SEA, MONK JIANZHEN'S SHIP MANAGED TO AVOID DISASTER AND ARRIVE SAFELY IN JAPAN. HE ESTABLISHED AN ORDINATION PLATFORM IN TODAIJI TEMPLE AT NARA, INSTRUCTING THE EMPEROR AND THE IMPERIAL FAMILY IN THE BODHISATTVA DISCIPLINE. HE IS ALSO HELPING THE MONKS OF JAPAN TO RENOUNCE THEIR VOWS AND RECEIVE NEW ONES.

THERE WAS NO FORMAL SCHOOL OF RISSHU BUDDHISM IN JAPAN BEFORE. NOW, IT WILL BE PASSED ON. THE BUDDHA'S RELICS UNDER MONK JIANZHEN'S CARE REMAIN WITH HIM. HE SEEMS TO BE PLANNING TO BUILD A NEW TEMPLE TO HOUSE THE BUDDHA'S RELICS. THIS TEMPLE WILL BE BUILT IN THE MANNER OF THE TANG AND WILL BE CALLED TOSHODAIJI.

THIS IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE. TO BUILD IT WILL TAKE MANY YEARS AND THE EFFORTS OF COUNTLESS PEOPLE. YET DESTRUCTION TAKES LESS THAN A DAY. WILL THOSE WHO CARRY THE GOLDEN TURTLES FOLLOW THE TANG ENVOY SHIPS AND ARRIVE IN JAPAN SECRETLY, WITH THEIR EYE ON THE BUDDHA'S RELICS?

DURING THIS TIME, I HAVE FINALLY BRACED MYSELF AND BEGUN LOOKING INTO THE THE GOLDEN TURTLES.



### PAYING RESPECTS TO LI BAI-

LI BAI, LUOYANG HAS FALLEN. THE VERY THING I FEARED HAS COME TO PASS.

I HEARD THAT DURING THEIR RETREAT BACK TO TONGGUAN, GENERAL GAO XIANZHI AND GENERAL FENG CHANGQING CHOPPED DOWN THE PAGODA TREES ON BOTH SIDES OF THEIR PATH IN A BID TO OBSTRUCT THE ROAD. WORD HAS IT THAT THEY ALSO OPENED THE TAIYUAN TREASURIES AND DISTRIBUTED ALL THE MONEY AND ITEMS WITHIN TO THE SOLDIERS, AS WELL AS BURNED ALL RATIONS, TO PREVENT THEM FROM FALLING INTO AN LUSHAN'S HANDS. BUT THE REBELS GAVE CHASE FASTER THAN THEY COULD RETREAT. SO THESE UNTRAINED SOLDIERS RAN FOR THEIR LIVES, ABANDONING THEIR ARMOR AND TRAMPLING OVER EACH OTHER. THE CASUALTIES ARE INNUMEROUS.

MEANWHILE, THE IMPERIAL COURT CONTINUES RECRUITING TROOPS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, YET NO ONE HAS ANSWERED THEIR CALL. ALL OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS WERE BEYOND ANYONE'S EXPECTATIONS. AT PRESENT, CHANG'AN IS ENVELOPED BY FEAR. AND WHAT TERRIFYING FATE HAS TAKEN LUOYANG, WHICH HAS FALLEN INTO ENEMY HANDS?

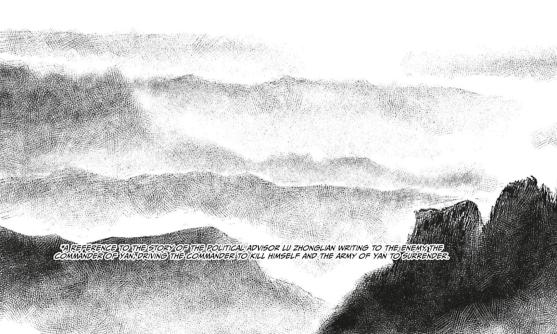
IT MUST BE TOO HORRIFYING TO EVEN IMAGINE. BAD NEWS ARRIVES EVERY DAY, LEAVING ME EVER WORRIED FOR YOUR SAFETY.

THE ONLY SILVER LINING IS THAT I HAVE DISCOVERED MONK JIANZHEN'S WHEREABOUTS.

### WORDS COULD FORCE THE ENEMY'S RETREAT, BUT NOBLES WOULD HAVE ME FAR AWAY.

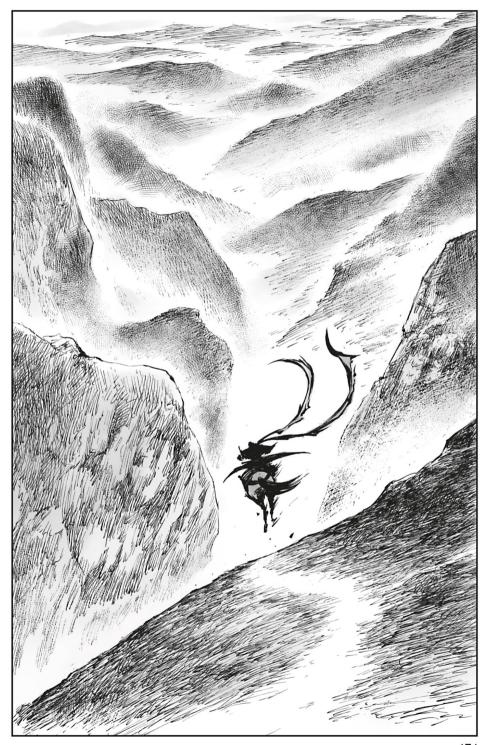
LIKE LU ZHONGLIAN'S\* LETTER I KEEP THIS STILL, AN ARROW YET TO BE RELEASED.

- FIVE POEMS ON THE ROAD TO DEATH (THREE), LI BAI







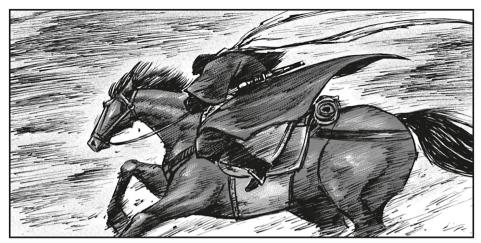


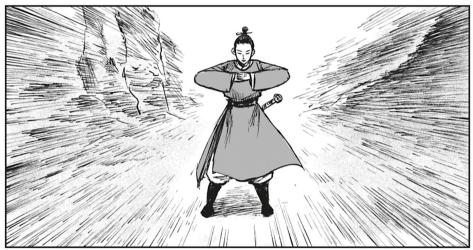


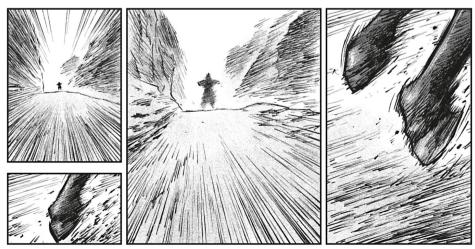


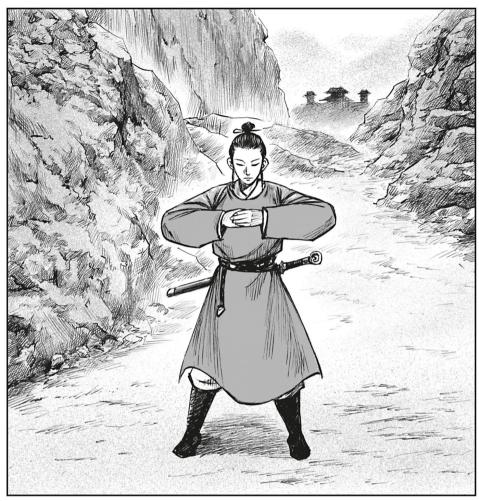








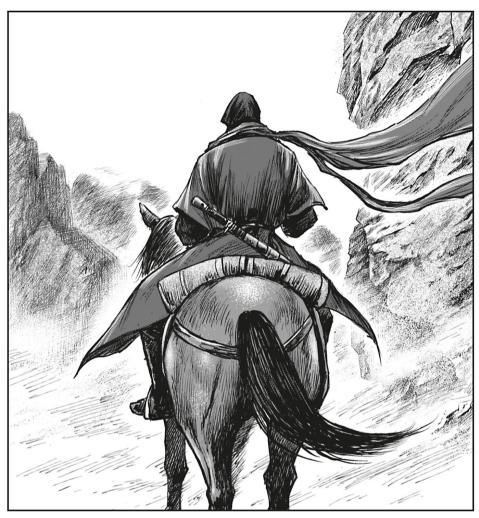








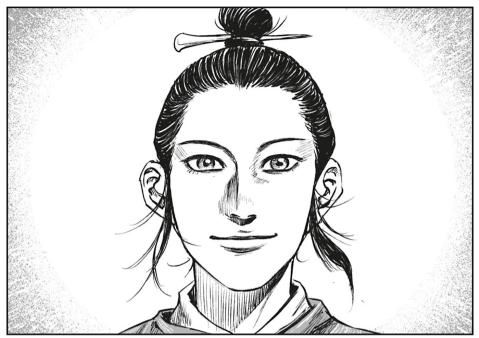




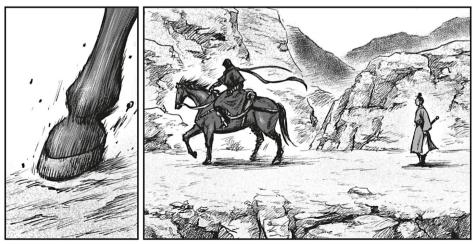


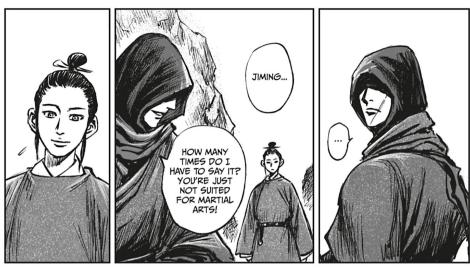












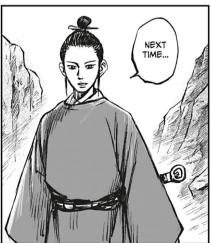










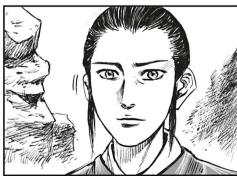


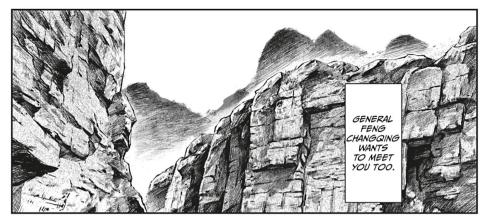










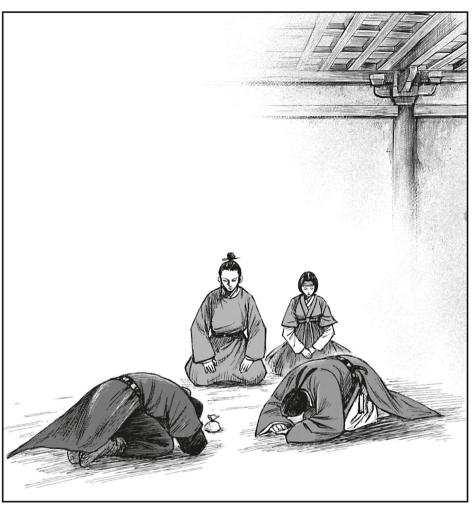


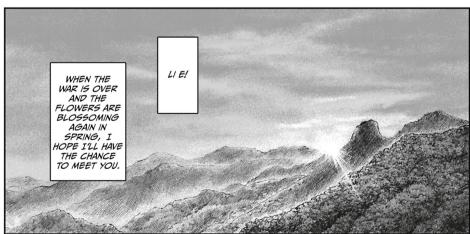


AT THAT TIME, LET US, THE OLD SOLDIERS OF ANXI, GATHER TOGETHER AND DRINK OUR FILL.

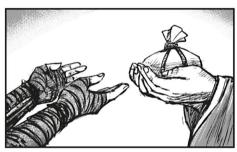










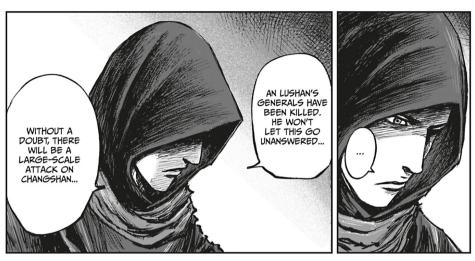






















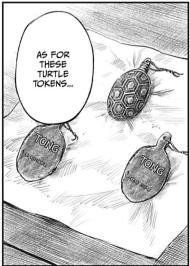






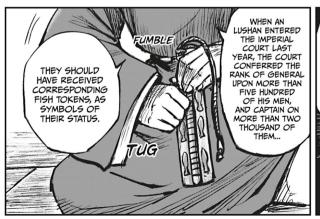




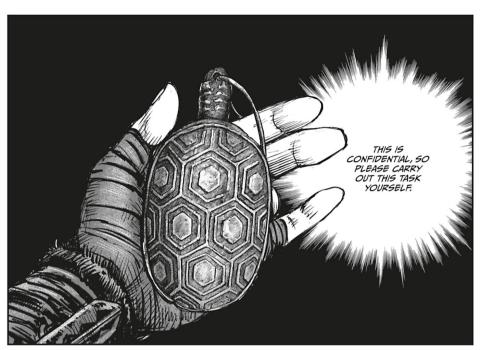


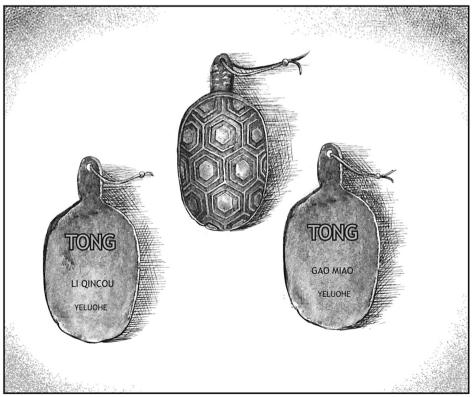








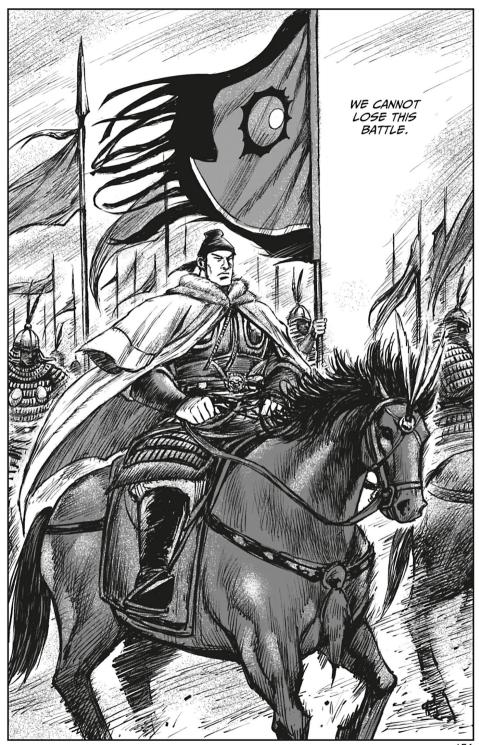


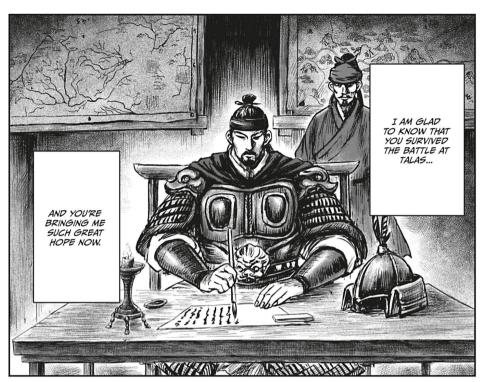








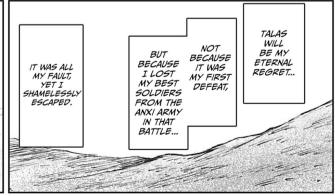


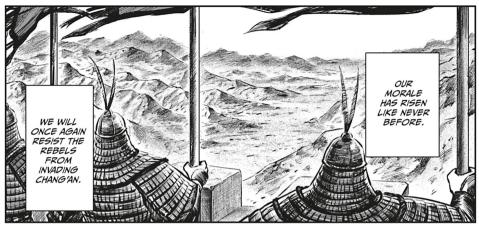




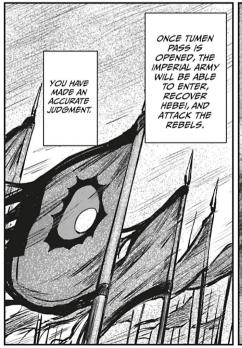


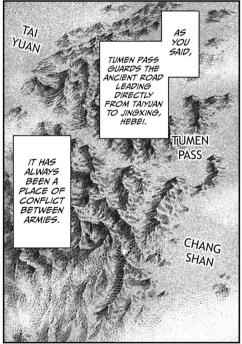








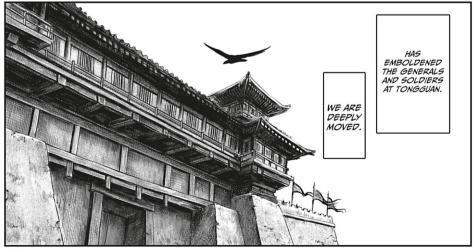


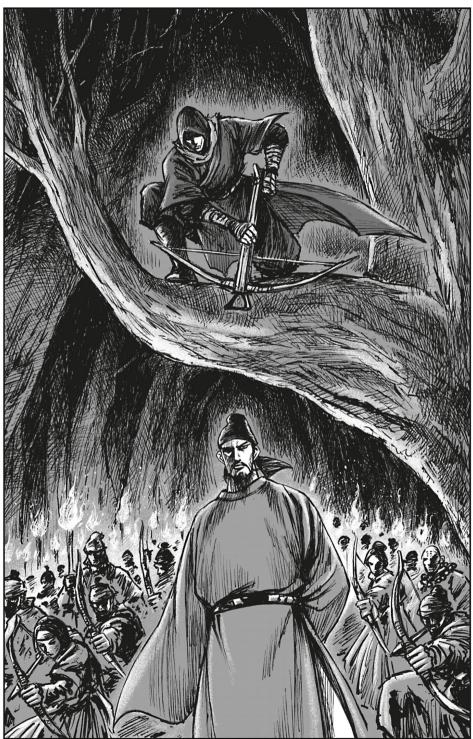




THE NEWS OF CHANGSHAN'S FEAT...





















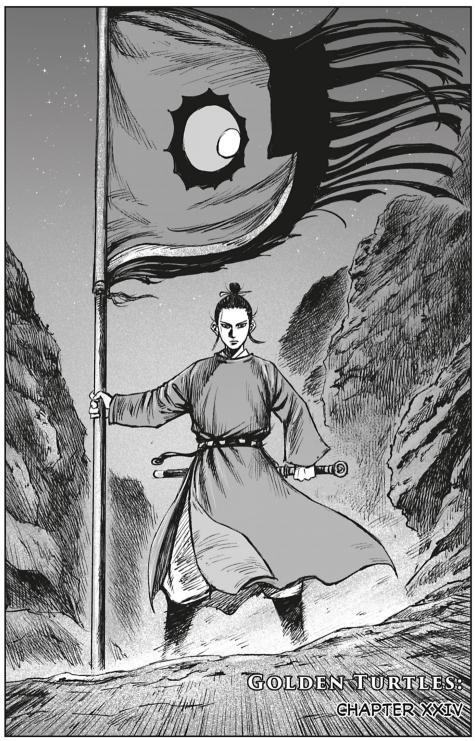


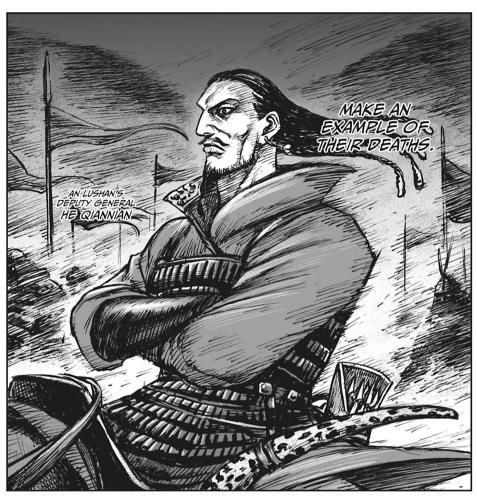


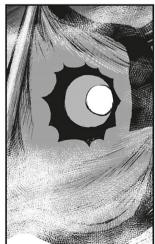






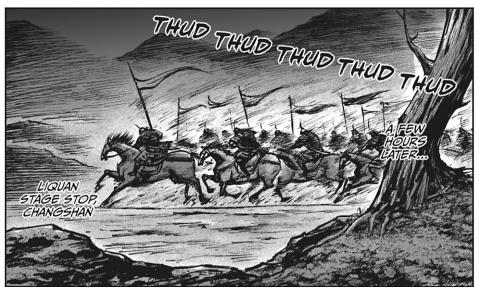












\* LIQUAN STAGE STOP: LOCATED IN THE SOUTH OF SHIJIAZHUANG CITY, HEBEI, IN MODERN-DAY CHINA.





















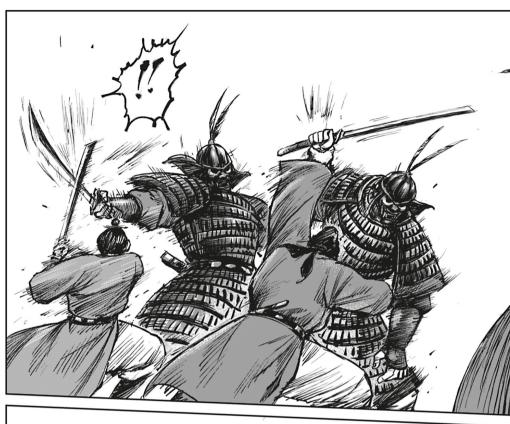


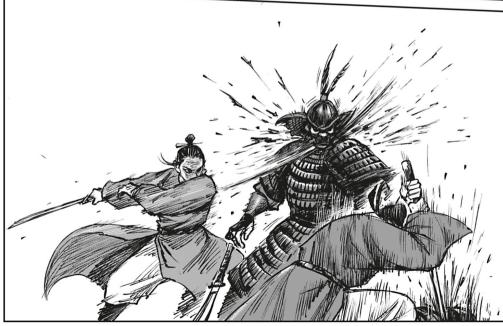


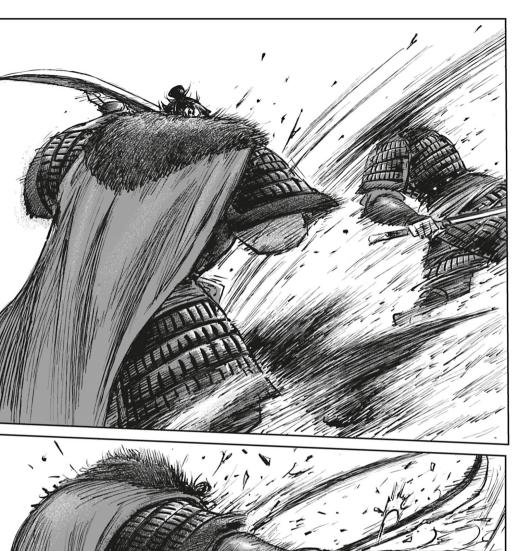


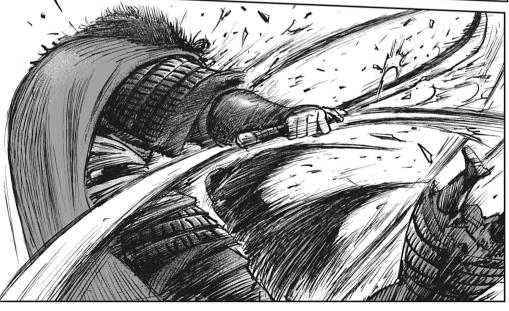








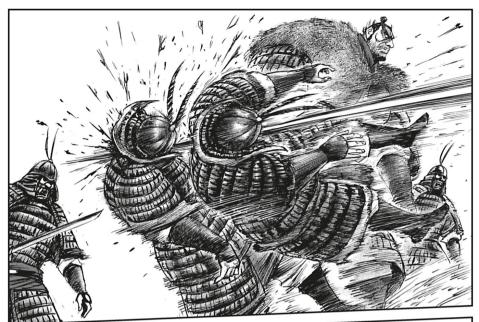










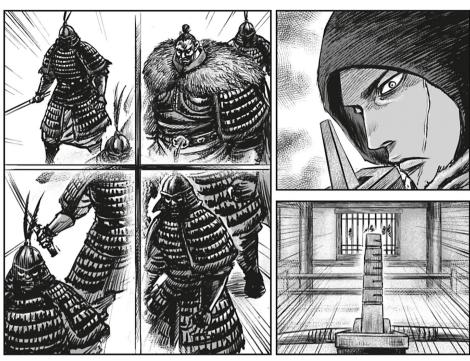






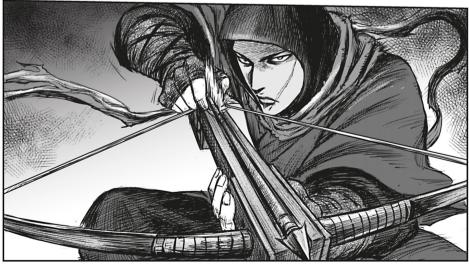




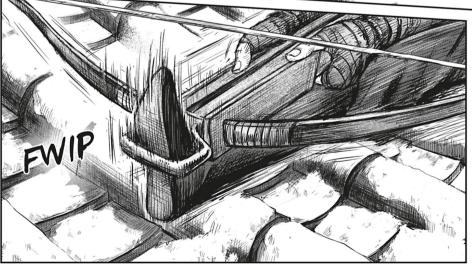
























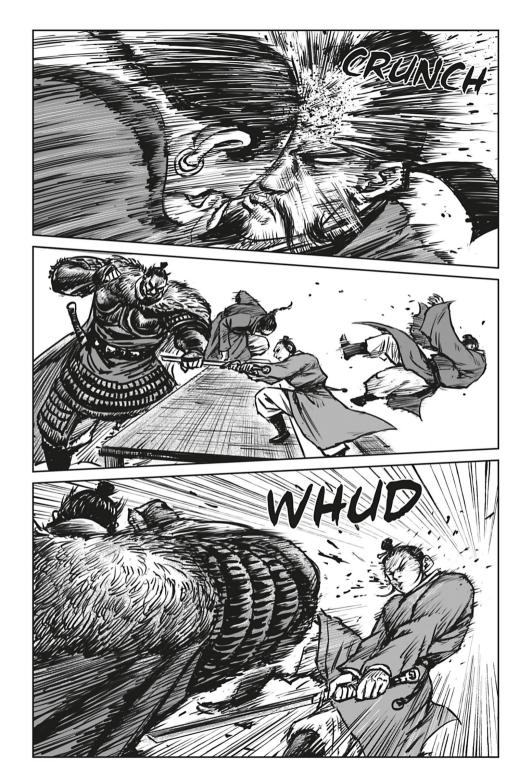






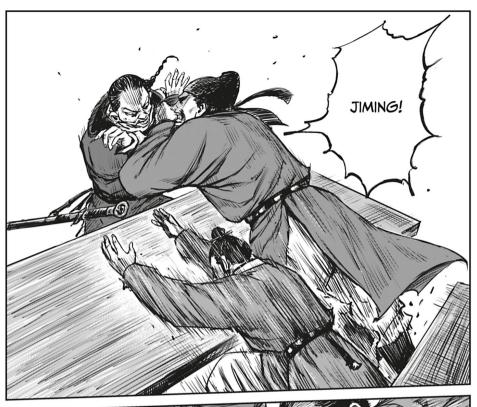


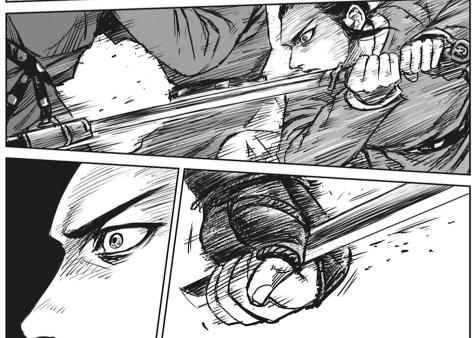




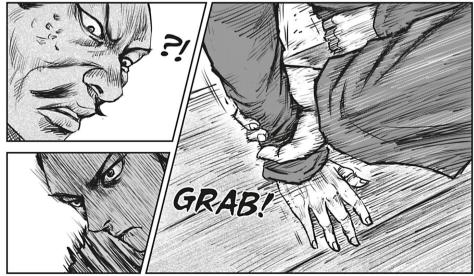






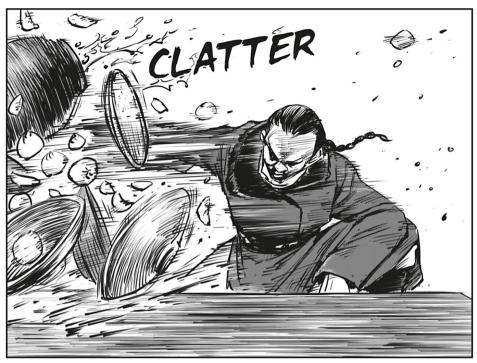








































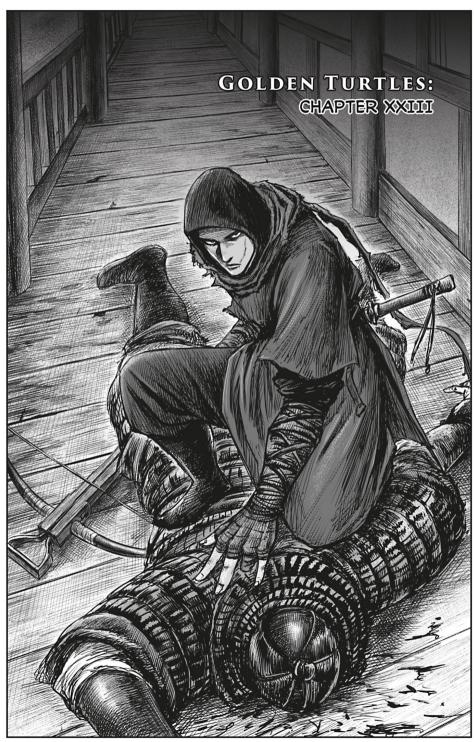














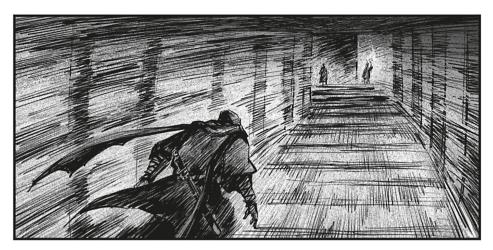
























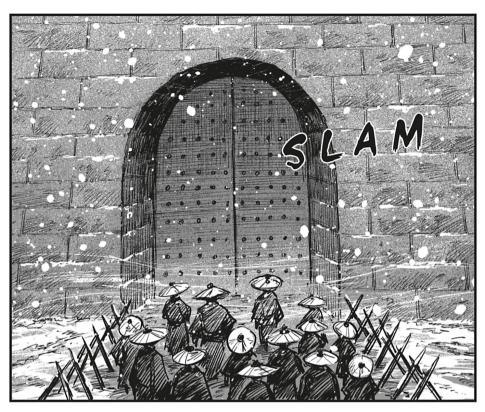


























\* SHOU LI: HANDYMEN IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES DURING THE TANG DYNASTY























































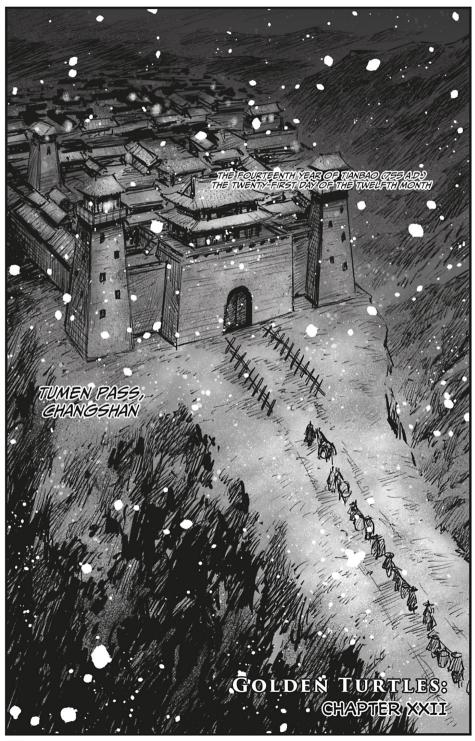




















































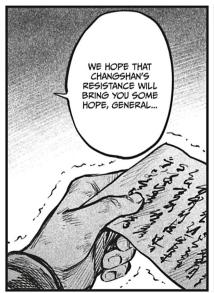
















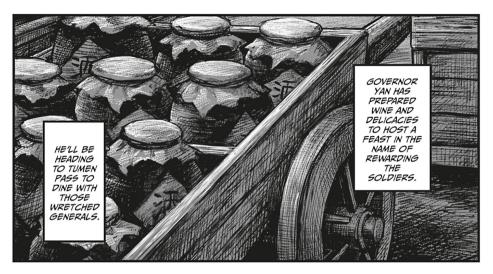


















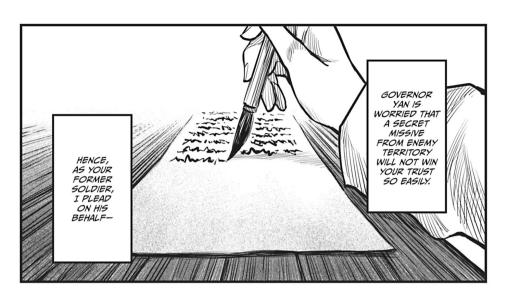












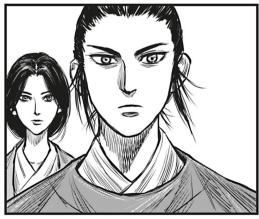








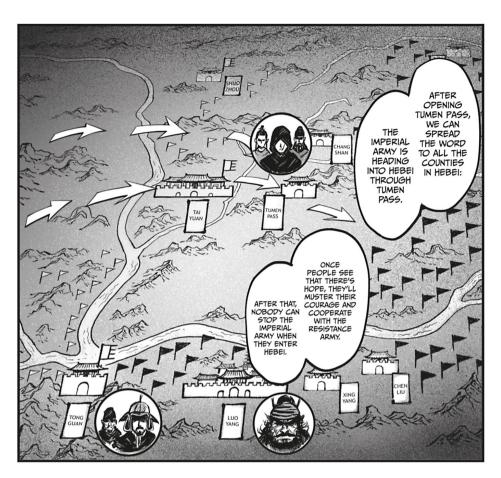


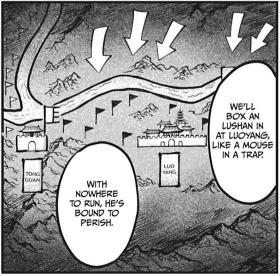
















































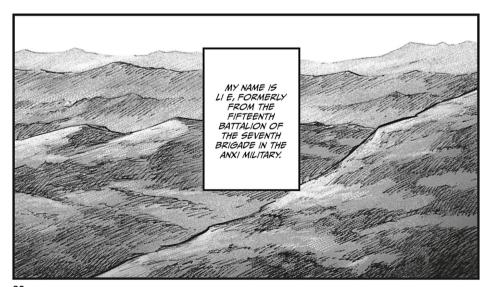


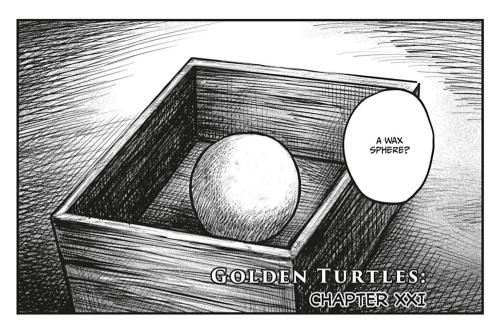










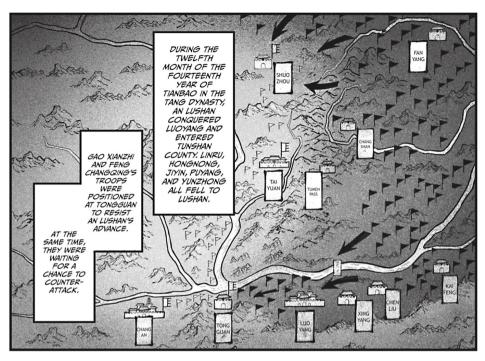








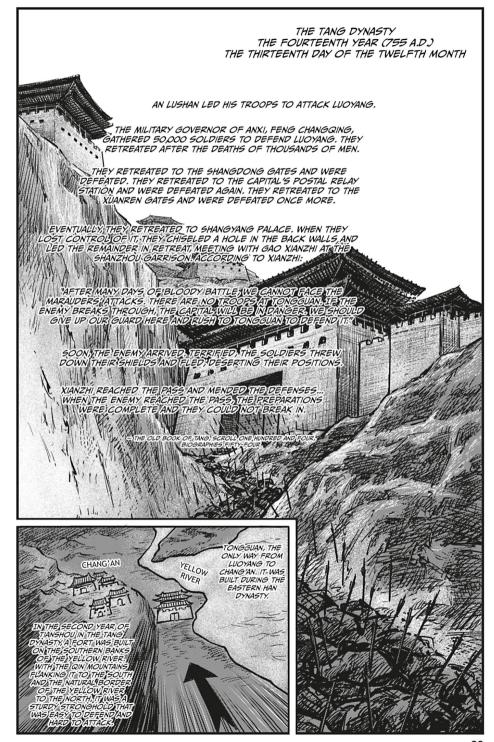














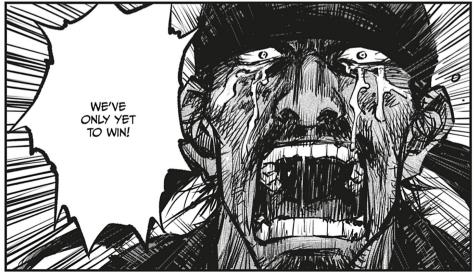


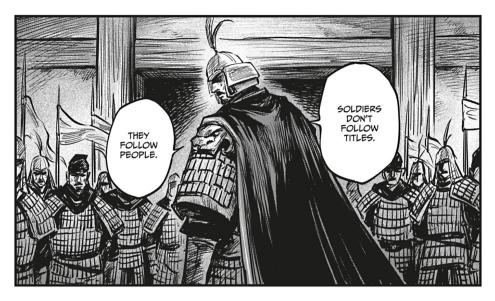
























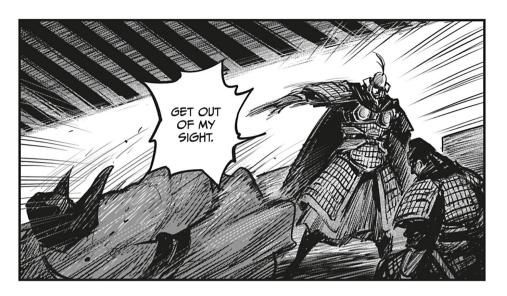






















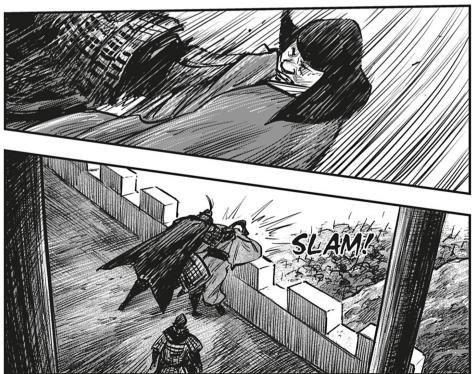








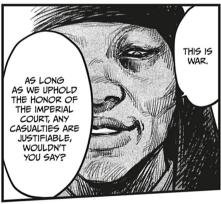






































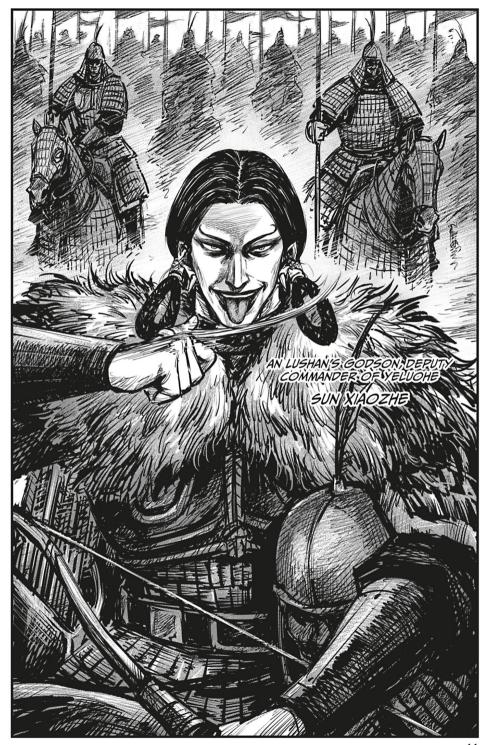


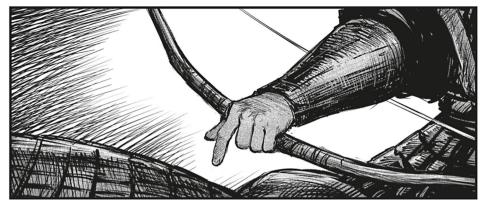


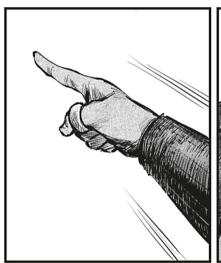






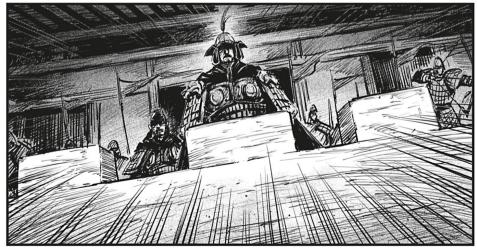
















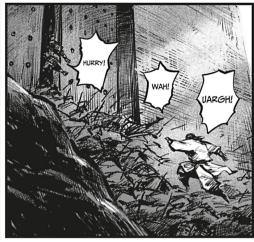






























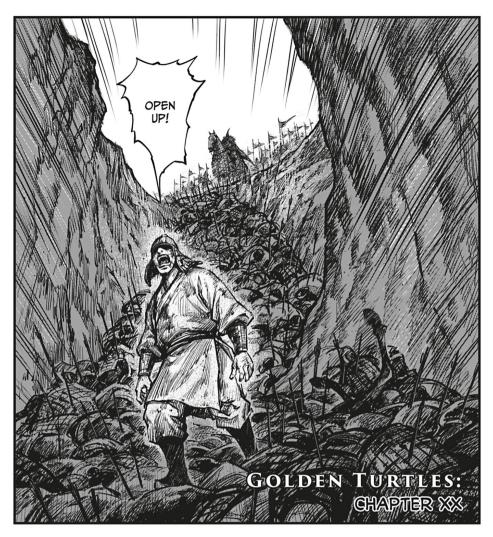






























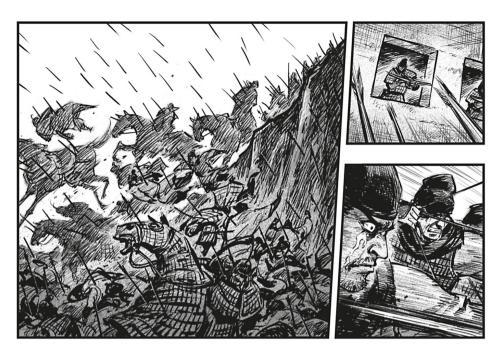
























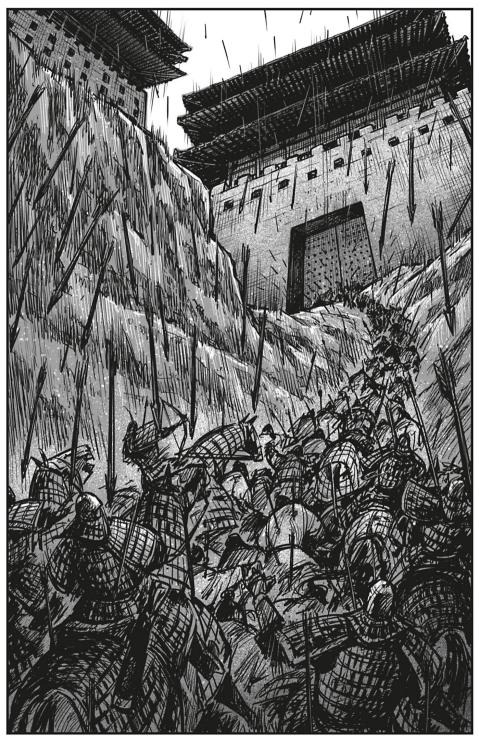








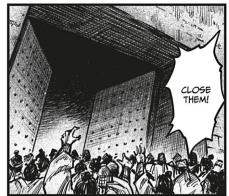




















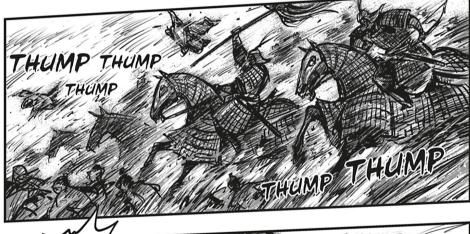






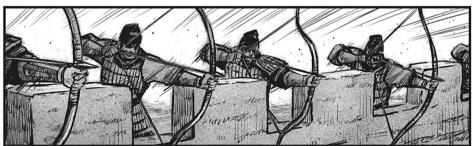


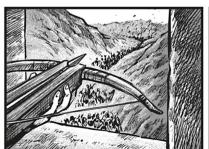


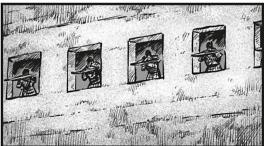


































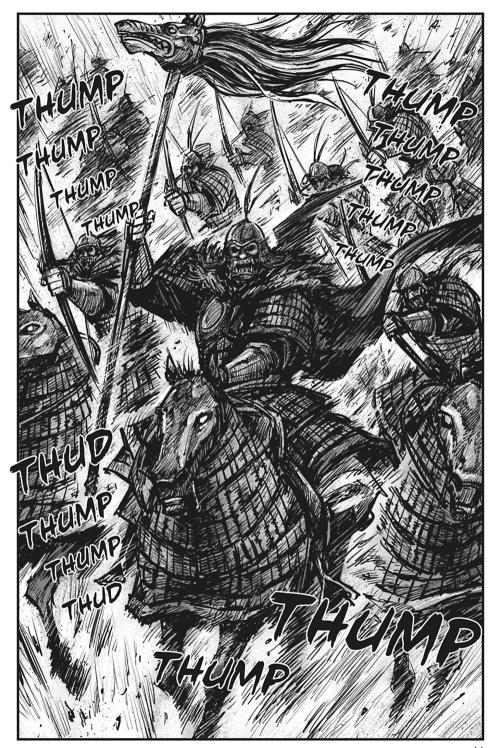


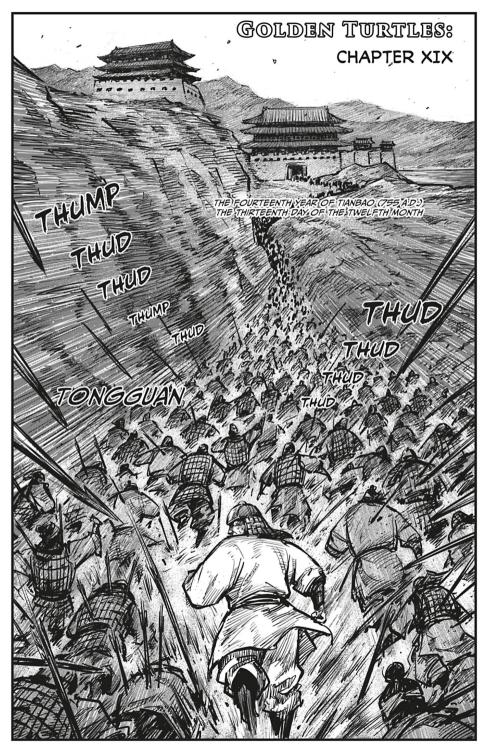


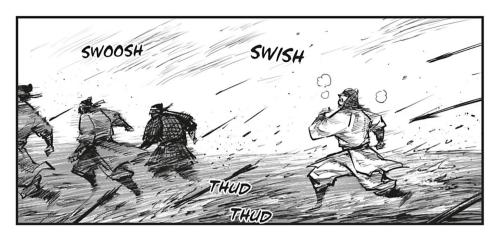


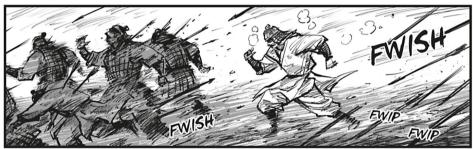


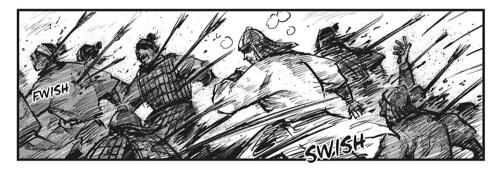


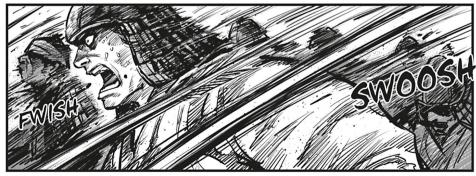


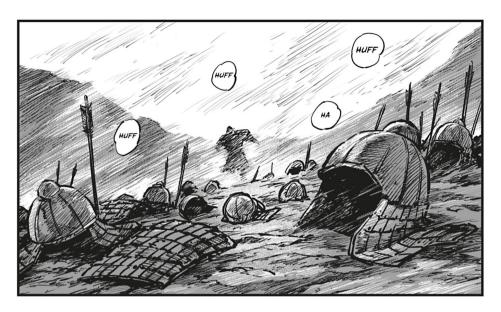


































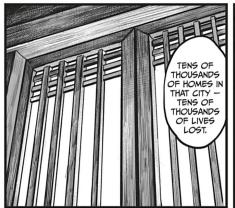






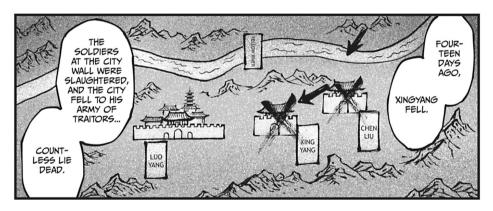










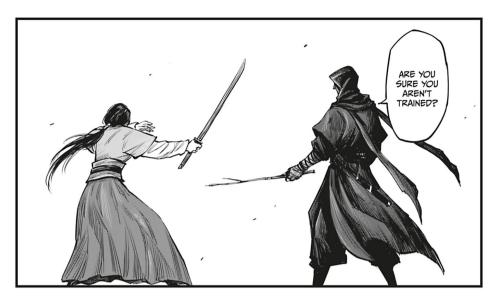












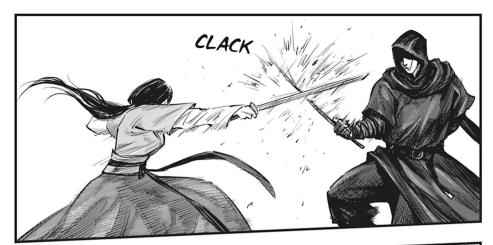






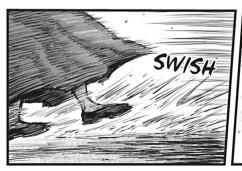




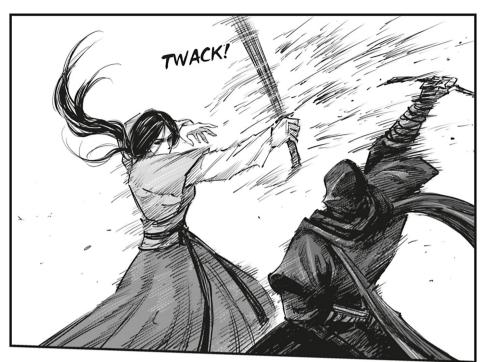


































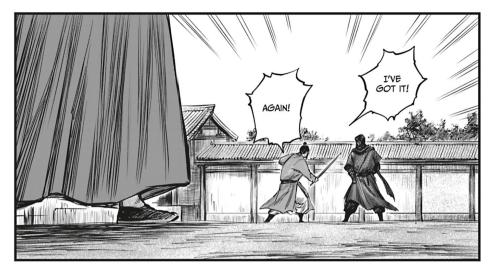






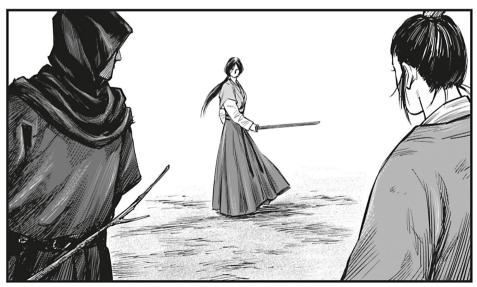












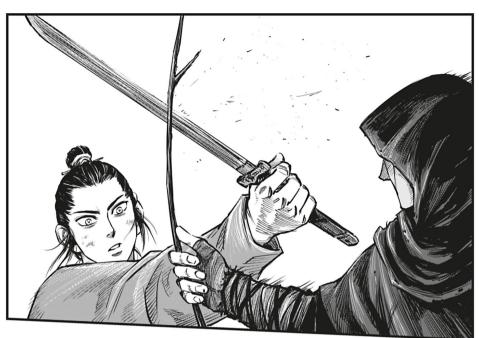




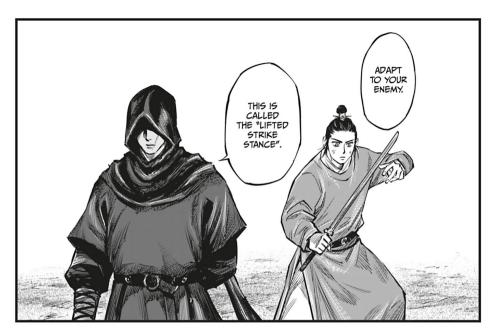




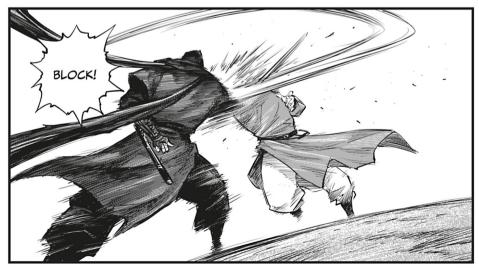


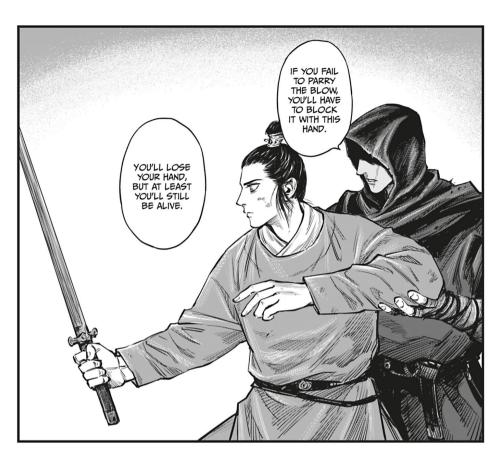


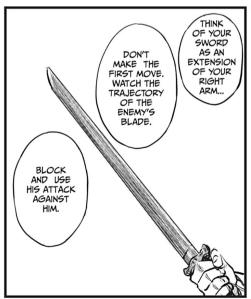






































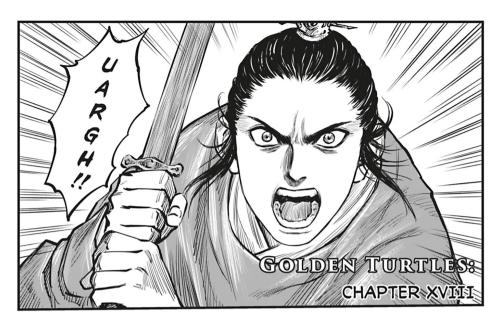


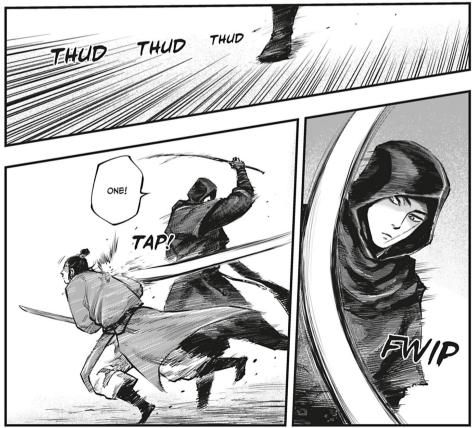




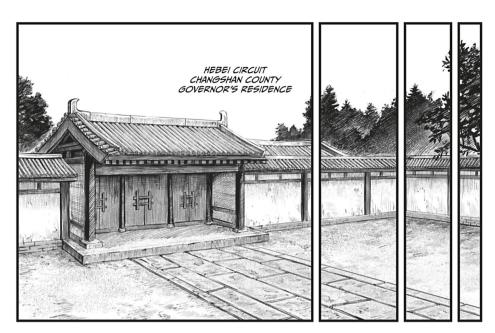


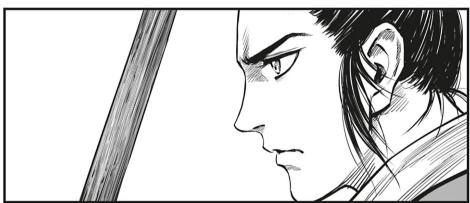






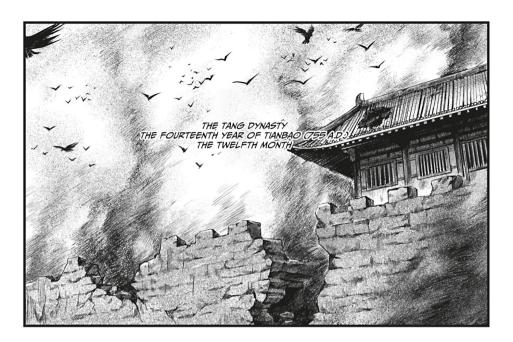


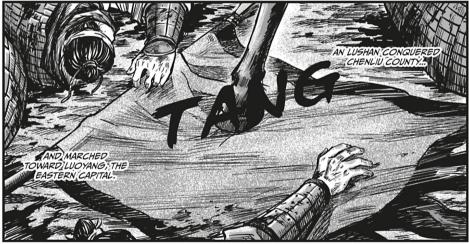












\* CHENLIU JUN: LOCATED IN PRESENT DAY KAIFENG CITY, HENAN PROVINCE, CHINA.























































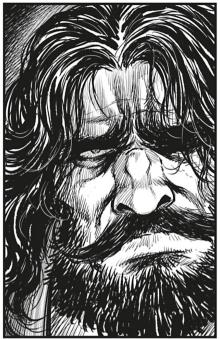






























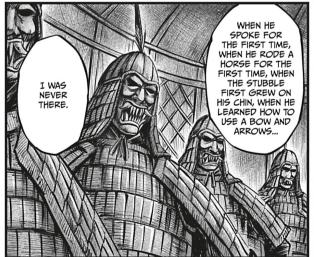


























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